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Federal Extension Service
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CLASSIFICATION AND SELECTION OF SUBJECT MATTER
FOR TEACHING PURPOSES.

Classification of Subject Matter

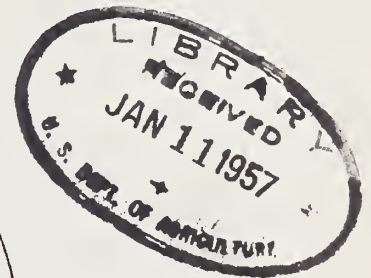
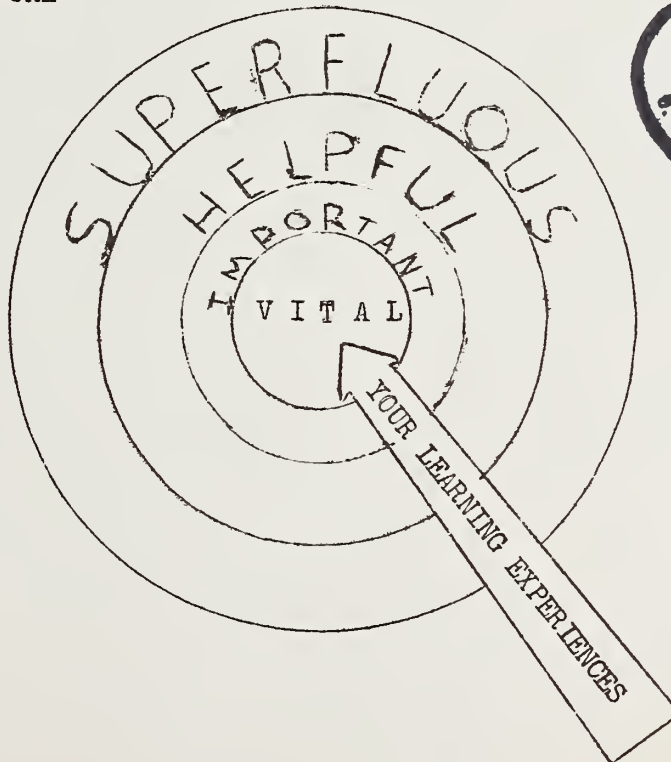
Subject matter is selected and taught in order to develop interests, knowledge or understanding, skills or attitudes. These outcomes are interwoven and dependent upon each other.

It would be a long job to teach everything there is known about any one problem and it would be unnecessary. It would be unnecessary because teaching or training is useful and effective only when it fulfills a needs.

The needs of farmers are different from the needs of college students; the needs of Maryland farmers for vegetable production may be quite different than those of Michigan farmers. On the basis of need we can divide subject matter into the following categories:

- a. Vital Subject Matter - That which is absolutely essential to the accomplishment of the objective.
- b. Important Subject Matter - That which is included for the purpose of giving the learner a basic understanding.
- c. Helpful Subject Matter - That which is related to the problem and gives a broader base of understanding on which to build.
- d. Superfluous Subject Matter - That which has only a small learning on the needs of the learner that it serves no recognized useful purpose in helping him.

SUBJECT MATTER AND THE
LEARNERS' NEEDS



The problem of the teacher is to select the bits of knowledge or subject matter that the learners MUST know in order to accomplish their objectives. Time and other factors permitting, subject matter which is DESIRABLE to know might be taught. It is rarely worth the effort to teach things which are just NICE to know or which are SUPERFLUOUS to the needs of the learners.

Selection of Subject Matter

Each problem in the program will have its objectives stated in terms of what the learners want or need to know, be able to do or accomplish. These general objectives will have been analyzed into the behavior changes relative to specific vital subject matter.

The prime sources of information which will help in the selection of the proper subject matter will need be surveyed. The starting point in the selection of subject matter is at the learning or teaching level of the learners. The subject matter which will be vital will be dependent upon the previously determined objective and the present level of the learners.

If one of the specific objectives is interest development, subject matter that has real interest building qualities will need be selected and will be vital. If goals need be established subject matter that will help do this job will be vital to learners and to this problem. Subject matter that will aid in bringing about desired understandings will also be vital. Subject matter that is not needed to realize desired objectives will be eliminated as superfluous to the immediate needs of the learners. If time is strictly limited it may be necessary to cut short the instruction in the important subject matter and even the vital information.

